

GOD REQUIRES REPENTANCE

Moved by His very nature, God sent His only begotten Son to make propitiation for sinners (cf. I John 4:8-10). His love is immeasurable. A characteristic of love is that it is longsuffering (cf. I Corinthians 13:4). Thus God is also longsuffering, “not willing that any should perish ...” (II Peter 3:9). Because of His great love He shows the riches of His grace by saving believers in Christ Jesus (cf. Ephesians 2:4-8).

God, though, has no fellowship with darkness (cf. I John 1:5). He does not condone sin, nor approves of those who participate in it. “The wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience ...” (Colossians 3:6). That day of wrath will be revealed at the righteous judgment of God, “who will render each one according to his deeds” (Romans 2:5, 6). Divine indignation will be poured out upon those who are self-seeking and unrighteous and do not obey the truth (cf. 2:8).

Therefore, God commands repentance. Jesus said, “Unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5). Before His ascension, He further explained, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:46, 47). The apostles of our Lord preached repentance. For example, in Athens Paul declared that God “now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness ...” (Acts 17:30, 31).

“Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!” (Romans 6:1, 2). Believers must repent to receive remission of sins, to be saved (cf. Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38). Repentance is an effective determination to change conduct, to turn the direction of one’s own personal life. “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.” (I John 1:6). Repentance is not apologetically admitting sin. “Godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted ...” (II Corinthians 7:10). A believer must sincerely admit he is a sinner, but he also must put away his sins. The truth in Jesus teaches “that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, .. and that you put on the new man ...” (Ephesians 4:22, 24). Anyone who practices the works of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:21).